
PRESS RELEASE



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SCAG, KERN COG LEADERS AGREE TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE COALITION TO PROMOTE KEY REGIONAL ISSUES

SANTA CLARITA, CA -- Leaders representing Southern California's regional planning agencies met recently to facilitate more unified planning efforts to address regional issues and priorities. Elected officials and senior staff from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) and the Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) – representing seven Southern California counties – agreed to work as a coalition in legislative advocacy to Congress to meet the region's goods movement investment needs. Summit participants also addressed priorities in housing reform, transportation infrastructure and ways to overcome funding shortages to pay for key investments.

Kern COG and SCAG leaders agreed to form a unified front in promoting regional priorities such as the Go California legislation that, among other things, permits design-build methods for infrastructure development that will alleviate congestion due to the massive influx of imports through Southern California.

"It is important that SCAG and Kern COG remain in close coordination on a variety of issues given the inter-relationships of the transportation, land use and other planning issues facing both of our organizations," said Mark Pisano, SCAG executive director. "From improving road and rail congestion, to improving airport access, to addressing a crisis in transportation funding, we need to unify our efforts to plan for our collective future."

In addition to Pisano, SCAG was represented at the meeting by Calabasas City Councilmember Dennis Washburn, Apple Valley Town Councilmember Tim Jasper and Lake Elsinore City Councilmember Thomas Buckley, who attended as members of SCAG's Regional Council. Kern COG representatives included Wasco Mayor Cherylee Wegman, Tehachapi City Councilmember Philip Smith, California City Councilmember Nicholas Lesnevich and Kern COG Executive Director Ron Brummett.

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SCAG and Kern COG representatives reviewed the successful early implementation of SCAG's 20-year growth visioning plan, Southern California Compass, to help accommodate growth throughout the region. The two planning organizations also discussed converting Route 99 to an Interstate Highway, the Safe Roads for Kern Measure, and the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. There was considerable discussion regarding the impact of current and recently enacted state and federal legislation, including SAFETEA-LU and the Governor's Go California Legislative Package. Finally, there was agreement that Southern California's regional agencies must strive to advocate as a unified region for legislative measures that will promote public/private partnerships and facilitate critical goods movement infrastructure investments.

The leadership from SCAG and Kern COG agreed to continue meeting on a regular basis to exchange information, coordinate planning for programs and projects, generate ideas about topics of mutual interest and potential funding sources.

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